United Nations

Press Release

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TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Secretary-General expresses "grave concern" about reports of heavy fighting and bloodshed in both northern and southern Iraq.

- Secretary-General of United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, to be held next summer in Brazil, says focus must be on development.

- Draft urging study on investment promotion service to aid developing nations exploit mineral resources introduced in Natural Resources Committee.

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Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar said today through his spokesman that he was "gravely concerned" about reports of heavy fighting and bloodshed in both northern and southern Iraq. He was particularly worried about the substantial increase in the number of Kurdish and Shi'ite refugees entering Iran and Turkey in the past few days.

On humanitarian grounds, the Secretary-General expressed the hope that maximum restraint be exercised and urged that the present situation be resolved peacefully without further loss of life.

In a separate development, the Secretary-General said today he had been informed that an intensive new phase in the negotiations on El Salvador was in the offing. This could include direct meetings in the first half of April, he said.

In other news today, the Security Council was scheduled to continue its consultations on the situation between Iraq and Kuwait. A United Nations official drew attention to a new text of a draft resolution which was now circulating in the Council.

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For information media—not an official record

The primary emphasis of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to be held next summer in Brazil must be on development.

This view was stated by the Conference's Secretary-General, Maurice Strong, in an opening address at a preparatory meeting today in Geneva.

Reporting from Geneva, a United Nations press officer said Mr. Strong emphasized that this was not meant to downgrade the environmental dimension, but to recognize that it was through the development process that environment must be addressed. The Brazil meeting must adopt specific measures to change economic behaviour at the level of nations, individuals and industry, as well as changes in international economic relations, particularly between industrialized and developing countries, he said.

The press officer further reported that the Brazil Conference was expected to produce an "Earth Charter" -- a statement of environmental and development principles to govern international and national conduct towards the earth. The Charter would also include an agreed international work programme on major environment and development priorities for the period to the end of the century. The Conference -- to be attended by foreign leaders from more that 100 countries -- would also work towards agreement on providing money and technology to implement this programme.

The press officer noted that negotiations had already begun on conventions on climate change, and protecting all plant and animal species which may be signed in Brazil next year.

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The Committee on Natural Resources, currently meeting at Headquarters, this morning heard an introduction of a draft resolution proposing support for developing countries which are seeking aid in exploiting their mineral resources. Under the text, the Secretary-General would report on the feasibility of establishing an investment promotion service for such support within the Department of Technical Cooperation for Development (DTCD).

The draft, sponsored by the "Group of 77" developing countries and introduced by the observer for Ghana, would have the Economic and Social Council request that the Secretary-General present a report to the Committee at its next session, in 1993, on methods for increasing financial flow and technology transfer to developing countries on concessional and preferential terms to help them optimize development of their mineral sectors.

The Committee also heard the introduction of a nine-power draft, under which member countries would be called upon by the Council to consider increasing their financial support to the United Nations Revolving Fund for Natural Resources Exploration.

The text, introduced by Japan, would also welcome the first replenishment to the Fund from a project in the Philippines and note efforts taken to reduce the Fund's administrative costs.

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